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INSIDE



Fire Gone Wild

A wildfire jumped lines dug by fire-fighters and spread out of control Sunday in northern Los Angeles County, forcing hundreds more families to flee their homes.

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Killer Flood

The death toll from flooding that has swept through northern Japan since last week rose to 18 on Sunday, as four bodies were found and more rainstorms left a broader swath of the area under water. Two elderly Japanese were missing.

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Ordinary Sunday

Once, within living memory, it was a day apart in many places: a 24-hour stretch of family time when liquor was unavailable, church was the rule, and shopping was impossible. But America changed, and it dragged Sunday along with it.

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'Unsafe' businesses abound

40 percent of NMI businesses not OSHA-compliant

By AGNES E. DONATO
REPORTER



AGNES E. DONATO

THIS IS HOW WE DO IT

Sea Star vessel's master fisherman Henly Kladiem gives participants in the 6th Annual International Children's Fishing Derby a crash course in fishing before the competition on Sunday afternoon.

11 locals deployed to help fight wildfires

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER

Eleven local men, two of whom are from the local firefighting division, will be deployed to California to help put out wildfires that have been raging around the state and in Nevada.

According to Forestry Program manager Tony Babauta, the crew is scheduled to depart at 5pm tomorrow. They will be off-island for three to four weeks. The

group's itinerary indicates stops in Tokyo and Honolulu before reaching Sacramento, where they would be briefed on their assignments at the U.S. National Forestry Service Facility in McClellan.

"Once they reach there, they are in the hands of the U.S. Forestry Service," he said. "They are expected to be there for about 21 days to a month, depending on the time needed to extinguish the fires."

Babauta said that crew might be mobilized to other states depending on "call."

"If there is a need, they might be going to assist with fires at other states, but that depends on the U.S. Forestry Service," he said.

Babauta disclosed that the Saipan crew is under the command of local firefighter Joseph Pangelinan.

Also being deployed are local firefighter Paul Sasamoto, James Blas of the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, Memorino Elyeisar of the Com-

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Babauta: NMI-China MOU not a dead issue

By AGNES E. DONATO
REPORTER

The CNMI government continues to pursue its application for approved destination status from the Chinese government, amid the ongoing diplomatic rift between the United States and China.

Gov. Juan N. Babauta said in an interview yesterday that there is no current development as to when the CNMI would get the approved destination status from China.

"But we'll keep pursuing that. It's still on the table and I'm hopeful that we'll get it sometime in the near future," Babauta said.

He recalled that the scheduled signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Commonwealth and China on April 16 this year was held off after the U.S.



Babauta

government implemented a policy requiring foreigners—including Chinese visitors—to be photographed and fingerprinted upon entry to the United States.

The policy has offended China and resulted in political tension between the two countries. The rift, compounded by minor details in the agreement, caused delay in the decision of the Chinese government on the issuance of the approved destination status to the CNMI.

"We understand that their [U.S. and

See BABAUTA on Page 12

New doctors practice on virtual patients

By LINDA A. JOHNSON
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J.

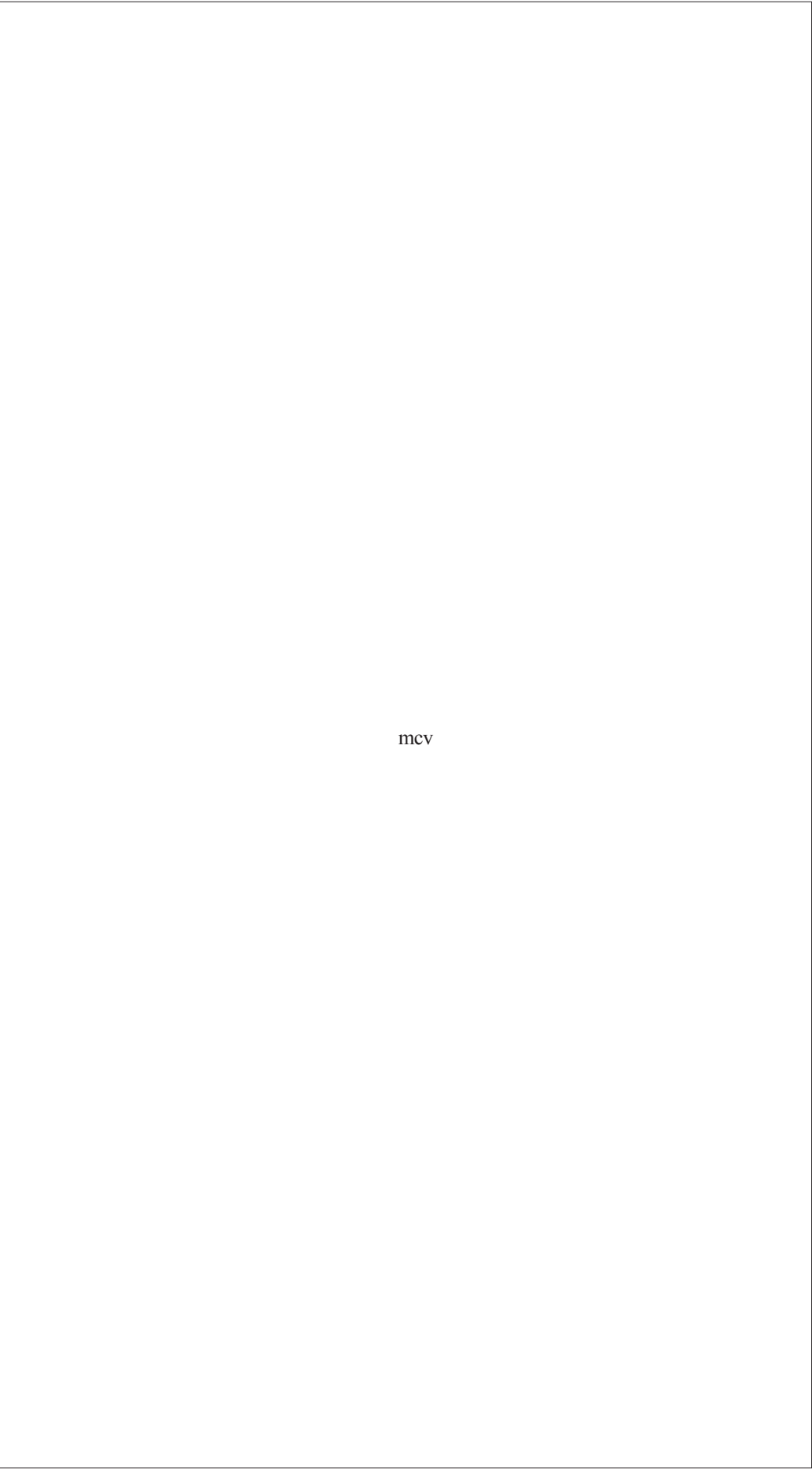
(AP)—The days of new doctors practicing on real patients may be numbered. Today, many doctors in training are making their first diagnoses—and their first mistakes—on plastic, wires and computer circuits rather than flesh and blood.

These virtual patients come in different shapes and sizes, much like the real ones.

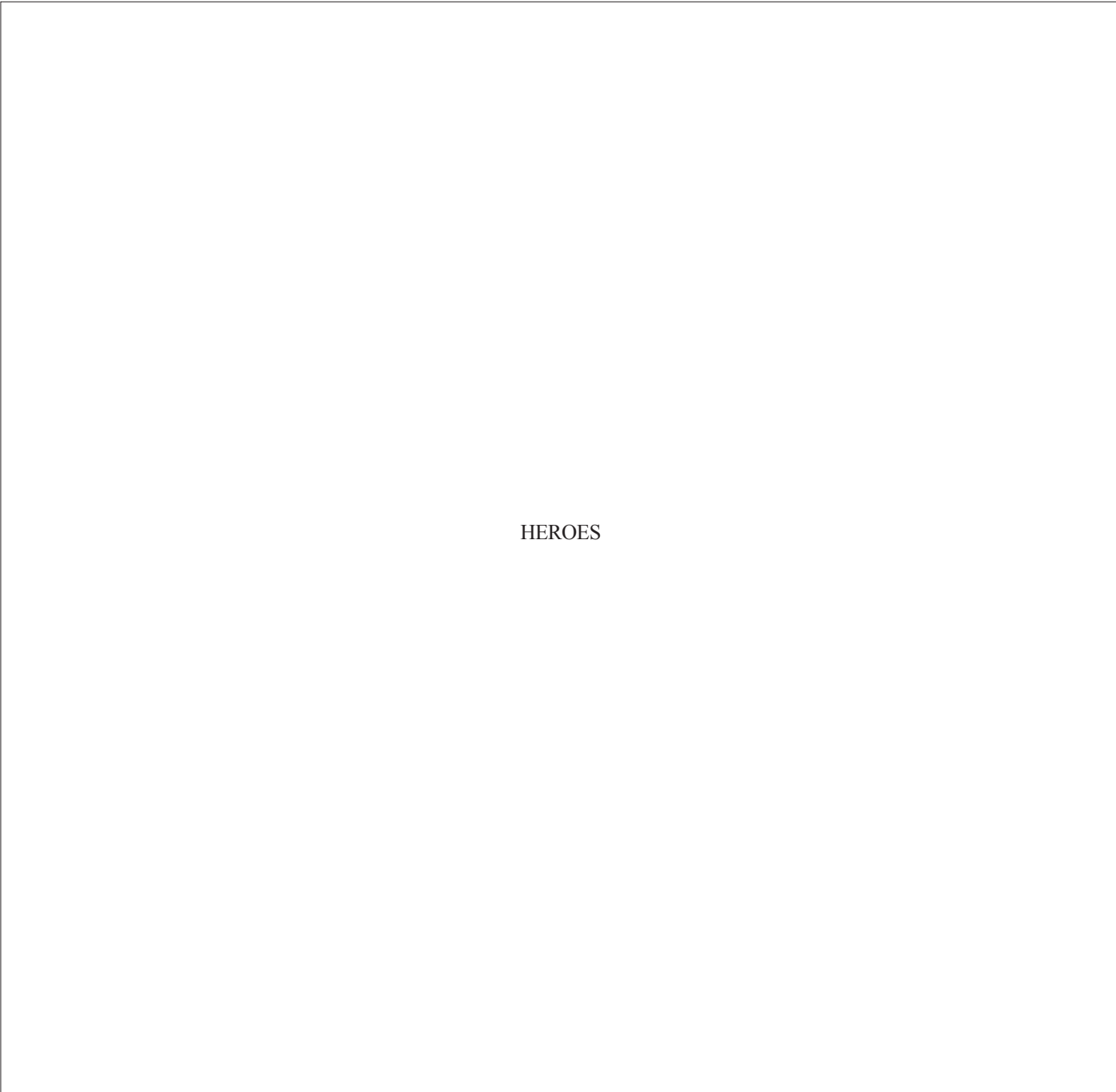
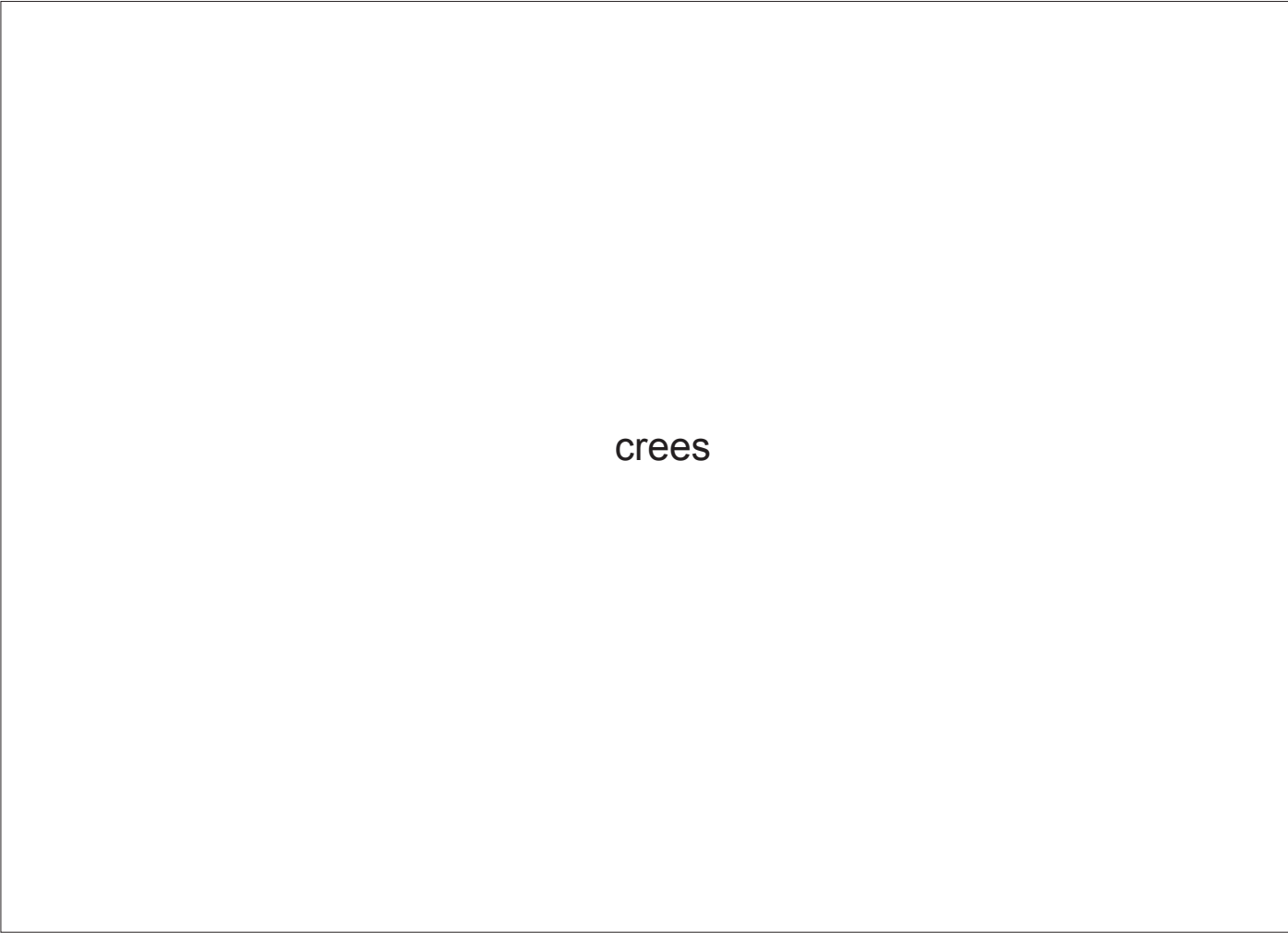
See NEW on Page 12



Local



mcv



Court stays proceedings in Stanley Torres case

By AGNES E. DONATO
REPORTER

Despite serious reservations, the Superior Court yesterday granted the motion filed by the Attorney General's Office for a stay in the proceedings against former Rep. Stanley T. Torres.

Superior Court associate judge Juan T. Lizama ordered that all case proceedings be suspended until the AGO's appeal of an earlier Superior Court order is resolved by the Supreme Court.

In his two-page order, Lizama said he has "two serious reservations about granting the stay," noting that the AGO's slow action on a May 25 order was to blame for the delay in the case.

In the May 25 order, the Superior Court denied the defendants' motion to quash the penal summons and information on the ground that these did not name the attorney general. The court, however, found that the identity of the attorney general was relevant to the case and had ordered the AGO to amend the charge

sheet to include the name of attorney general Pamela S. Brown.

On June 2, the government sought clarification on some points of the May 25 order, which the court provided the next day.

"The government then sat on this case for more than a month, neither complying with the court's order, nor raising its constitutional concerns about the order with either this court or the Supreme Court," Lizama noted.

He added that the AGO was "apparently finally motivated to act" when defendant Frank S. Ada moved to dismiss the complaint on July 8, partly because of the government's failure to comply with the May 25 order.

On July 9, the AGO asked the Supreme Court to issue a writ overturning the Superior Court's order. Three days after, the government asked the Superior Court to issue by July 19 an order staying the proceedings in the case pend-

ing the Supreme Court ruling on the AGO's appeal.

In granting the stay, Lizama expressed regret over the fact that no time has been allowed for the defendants to respond to the motion, or for a hearing to be held.

"The court is naturally disinclined to grant a stay on an expedited basis when need for the expedited consideration was created solely by the movant," the judge said.

Lizama also said he was concerned that the issue on separation of powers, which the AGO raised before the Supreme Court, was not presented in any way to the Superior Court for consideration.

"Nonetheless, the court recognizes that this is a question of first impression in the Commonwealth. Furthermore, the court trusts that the Supreme Court can be trusted to render a quick and fair decision on the issue, thus not unduly prejudicing

the defendants," Lizama said.

On March 11, 2004, deputy attorney general Clyde Lemons Jr. and chief prosecutor David Hutton charged Torres with five counts of misconduct in public office, conspiracy to commit theft, conspiracy to commit theft by deception and illegal use of public supplies, services, time and personnel.

Frank Ada was also charged with four counts each of conspiracy to commit theft and conspiracy

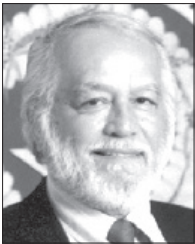
to commit theft by deception, and illegal use of public supplies, services, time and personnel.

Dorothy Sablan had five counts filed against her in each of the last three offenses.

The case stems from allegations that Sablan received at least five checks totaling \$5,384.67 in government payroll in 2003 while working as Torres' office manager, when she was actually off-island. Ada allegedly prepared fraudulent time and attendance

sheets indicating that Sablan had performed her duties when she was off-island.

Torres and Brown have been at odds with one another dating back to the time of her confirmation by the Senate for her nomination as attorney general. Soon after Brown was confirmed to the post, the charges against the congressman were filed in court. The AGO claimed that its investigation on Torres began before Brown was even confirmed.



Torres



HONORARY CITIZEN
Aqua Resort Club food and beverage manager Pol Urcia received a Certificate of Honorary Citizenship from Saipan Mayor Juan Borja Tudela for 15 years of dedicated service. Tudela personally handed the award to Urcia last Friday at the ARC.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Camacho: Tough times ahead for DPS

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER

Already faced with a severe shortage of personnel, the Department of Public Safety is expecting a tougher road ahead, according to DPS commissioner Edward C. Camacho.

In an interview yesterday, Camacho said the manpower shortage is beginning to take its toll on the available personnel, with responsibilities being spread out among fewer people who are working in longer shifts.

"It's tough, and it's going to get tougher," he said. "We are starting to feel the work-related stress, [but] we are able to manage and continue to fulfill our public service, even with the limited resources."

Camacho said the search for answers to address the issue continues, with the meeting within the department slated for tomorrow. "We are going to meet and find ways to deal with the issue."

Further, the department chief stressed the need for emergency hiring to fill the slots left vacant by the departure of Army re-

servists within the department.

"I have some vacant slots and this is one way to take care of the situation: by filling that," he said.

Camacho said police officers currently work in 12-hour shifts. Although many have adjusted to the workload due to past overtime operations, work-related stress may be generated due to the extended hours on a regular basis.

Earlier, Senate President Joaquin G. Adriano said he would introduce a joint resolution to authorize DPS to conduct emergency hiring when the upper house resumes session tomorrow.

The Senate President said he is looking at possibly authorizing the governor to identify and reprogram funds if the current DPS budget falls short in hiring some 80 to 100 employees to fill the vacant slots at the department. The resolution would also cover the needed funding for training at the CNMI's police academy.

About 30 policemen and firefighters left for the Army Reserve training in Hawaii, in the

wake of the Pentagon's call for reservists to boost depleted U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The deployment leaves the department with 115 policemen and 71 firefighters on Saipan.

The number for the Fire Division is expected to decrease tomorrow after two firefighters are deployed to California to assist the U.S. Forestry Service in fighting wildfires. The two, along with nine others, make up a crew that leaves for Sacramento tomorrow at 5pm.

Senate minority leader Pete Reyes also said he would be amenable to authorizing the governor to identify and reprogram funds—if necessary—to implement the emergency hiring of DPS personnel.

With the manpower shortage, Camacho also urges resigned DPS employees to return to service. He said the department is also weighing the possibility of tapping the services of DPS retirees.

Camacho earlier reiterated the need for additional manpower for the department on Tinian and Rota.

CARS UNLIMITED

movie house



‘MADE IN THE CNMI?’
Gov. Juan N. Babauta demonstrates to reporters a CamelBak product, which a Korean investor plans to manufacture here in the CNMI for the U.S. Department of Defense. Babauta said Dong-In Entech Co., Ltd. is in the process of identifying a land that would house the multi-million dollar investment. CamelBak is a leading name in outdoor gear products, including military backpacks and hydration systems. The governor recently invited the company to meet with officials of the CNMI Department of Commerce in connection with the proposed venture.

CNMI’s HR group to discuss EEOC, Cobra

The Society for Human Resource Management has invited Timothy Riera of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and Cindy Adams of the U.S. Department of Labor to speak at a special half-day meeting.

Riera will discuss current issues with Equal Employment Opportunity such as the definition of an online applicant and will provide updates on the Commission.

Adams will discuss the U.S.

Department of Labor’s final changes on the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act. These changes will make it easier for employees to understand their rights under COBRA and make it easier for employers to meet their obligation notice.

Both issues being discussed will affect public and private sector employers in the CNMI.

“Join is to learn more about EEOC and COBRA and how they affect your organization,”

the group said in a statement.

The meeting will be held at the Charley’s Cabaret, Pacific Islands Club Saipan on July 29, from 8am to 1pm. The cost, including lunch is \$35 for SHRM members and \$45 for non-SHRM members.

Seating is limited; therefore members and others interested in attending this meeting should contact Shane at 234-1234 ext. 5415 or Andrea at 235-6231 ext. 5122 for reservations. *(PR)*

Tourist nearly drowns off Laulau

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER

A female tourist who was diving off the shore of Laulau Beach nearly drowned Friday afternoon, according to the Department of Public Safety.

Fifty-one-year-old Tamiko Saito was reportedly with her daughter, Aki Saito, and dive instructor Hideki Morita at the site when the incident occurred.

Police report showed that the three began their dive at Laulau at about 9:49am. The dive lasted until 10:33am, after which the group decided to wait another hour before making a second dive.

According to the report, Morita said the second dive began at about 11:33am. He led them 50 feet out to show them the reef area, then head-

ed back to about 12 feet.

It was at that point that Morita instructed the victim’s daughter to clear her mask, which she successfully managed. The victim, however, had problems doing so.

“[Morita] said that she saw the victim was inhaling water while clearing her mask and she was coughing,” the report stated.

Morita then approached the victim and took her to the surface at about 12:16pm.

“[Morita] said the victim kept coughing and water was coming out from her mouth while at the surface...he escorted both of them to shore and transported the victim to [the Commonwealth Health Center] for treatment and examination,” the report added.

The report indicated that both Saito and her daughter had ear-

lier taken Open Water Scuba Diving lessons at the Nikko Hotel swimming pool and Sugar Dock beach under the instruction of Morita.

However, the victim’s daughter, Aki, told police that her mother had been experiencing difficulty in clearing her mask since the beginning of the scuba lessons and needed more time to practice the skills.

At about 6:28pm, DPS Boating Safety Section dispatched officers to the CHC to check on the incident.

Investigation revealed that the victim was diagnosed with fluid in her lungs and was admitted for observation and treatment by Dr. Francois Classens.

The victim and her family arrived on July 14 and are expected to go home on July 19.

Tongan policeman found not guilty of obstructing justice

NUKUALOFA, Tonga (Matangi Tonga, PIR)—A former Tongan police officer was cleared of charges that he interfered with the course of justice and of bribery connected to marijuana case evidence.

A jury of five women and two men dismissed the charges against Viliami Toki (35) in the Nuku’alofa Supreme Court on 14 July.

It was charged that on January 31, 2002 he interfered with the course of justice when he tried to persuade Police Officer ‘Unga Fa’ao to destroy the criminal case file of a woman Leiola Fifita. At that time Leiola was awaiting trial on the charge

of the possession of marijuana.

Toki was also charged that on the same day he offered to pay money to Police Officer ‘Unga Fa’ao, in consideration for him to destroy the exhibits and criminal case file of Leiola Fifita.

Counsel for the defendant, Masao Paasi in his final submission argued that there was no proof that his client interfered with the course of justice. He pointed out that Leiola Fifita had subsequently appeared in court and was found guilty, and with regards

to the charge for bribery Masao said that there was no proof of any money being paid. He also queried why the police were not very active in their pursuit to investigate the person whom it was claimed that Toki had told Police officer ‘Unga Fa’ao was willing to pay the bribery.

After a three-days trial the jury took about ten minutes to pass their decision of not guilty.

The hearing was presided over by Chief Justice Ford and the legal counsel for the Crown was ‘Aminiasi Kefu.

PNG aviation strike averted

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (PNG Post-Courier, PIR)—The Government last night averted a crippling civil aviation strike at the 11th hour.

At about 9:30 p.m. yesterday, Civil Aviation Minister Don Polye signed a guarantee to spend K1.9 million to settle the outstanding union claims.

The unions agreed to the Minister’s guarantee and called off the proposed four-day strike action, which was to have begun at midnight.

The unions had planned to stay away from work until Monday to protest against the Civil Aviation Authority management’s failure to pay outstanding airfares for retrenched and non-retrenched officers and back payments for the pay period 1 to 12 of this year, a 5 percent salary increase for this year and performance-based salary increments.

About 200 CAA workers earlier in the day had agreed to walk off their jobs at midnight after a meeting in Port Moresby.

This would have resulted in the shutdown of vital aviation safety services nationwide offered by

the air traffic control and flight, technical and airport rescue and fire fighting divisions.

Flights by domestic airline operators, including flag carrier Air Niugini and Papua New Guinea’s largest third level airline operator PNG Airlines, would have been adversely affected.

Only international airlines flying over upper Papua New Guinean airspace and overseas-bound medivac services during the strike-period would have been spared.

Earlier in the day, PNG Airlines chief executive Simon Wild in an email to the Post-Courier said his company had contingency plans in place and would strive to maintain current operations.

“We will assess the situation tomorrow morning (this morning) and as events develop so as to ensure minimal disruption to our customers,” he said.

Air Niugini chief executive Rod Nelson was reportedly at a series of frenetic meetings late last night to map out its response in the event the strike would have eventuated.

calvary book
sale

rms



OVERTIME CHANGES
From left, Richard L. Hamilton and Louis F. Cabuhat of the U.S. Department of Labor explain to members of the Saipan Garment Manufacturers Association changes in the Wage and Hour regulations during a two-hour training at the SGMA offices.

APIL meets on Guam for general assembly

GUAM (PDN/PIR)—The Association of Pacific Island Legislatures is holding its 23rd general assembly on Guam this week.

The members of the association are the legislative assemblies of American Samoa; the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; the Federated States of Micronesia’s Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei and Yap states; the Marshall Islands; Palau; Kiribati; Nauru; Hawaii; and host Guam, the association announced.

The last APIL general assembly held on Guam was in 1999.

The theme for this year’s general assembly is “Environment and Cultural Tourism: Bridging the Islands.”

After opening ceremonies on Sunday, speakers scheduled yesterday included:

- John Salas, University of Guam associate professor of international tourism, who talked about tourism markets of Micronesia.
- Guam Visitors Bureau General Manager Tony Lamorena on eco-tourism and eco-cultural issues
- Dennis Gonsalves, director, of the U.S. Pacific Basin Agricultural Research Center in Hilo, Hawaii, who talked about an emerging research force to help agriculture in Hawaii and the Pacific islands.

The generally assembly takes place at the Guam Legislature through today.

name the mall

Samoan village wants compensation for loud and dirty power generator

APIA, Samoa (Samoa Observer, PIR)—Tanugamanono village has sought redress from the Electric Power Corporation (EPC) over excessive noise pollution and gaseous fumes from the power station located there.

The village recently complained that “ear-splitting noise” from the station’s generators has become a health hazard to those living nearby.

They said that some have been diagnosed with ear problems and recurring migraines. Loud noise, they said, also disrupts daily life and especially children’s schoolwork.

Black fumes belched out by the four large generators when it is turned on at night, they said, made people nauseous.

According to village mayor Anauli Pofitu, the village council has met with EPC general manager Muaausa Joseph Walters and senior management staff.

“The village has requested that they be provided with some monetary compensation,” Anauli said.

“We have also asked EPC for concessionary benefits such as free electricity for the whole village.”

Anauli said that they were told by EPC to give them two weeks to discuss the matter at the board level.

That decision is expected this week, he said.

Anauli revealed that EPC offered to buy all the land that was bordering the station.

“But we turned it down as all that land is customary owned and belong to the Sa Atoa family of Tanugamanono.

“The land they were asking for amounted to half the village.”

Anauli said that EPC had requested they be given time to ‘think through’ the request as any special deal might upset other villages where power stations are located.

“This power station was built in 1966 and our people have been suffering for a long time with the loud noise and fumes that it emits.”

“Nearly 40 years and much longer than any power station built in any village.”

“The problem has been raised several times in the past decade.”

A handful of families neighboring the station had been at the forefront of the issue, Anauli said.

“But now the matter has been taken up at the village level following a request by these families.”

Vanuatu election results released

MELBOURNE, Australia (Radio Australia, PIR)—The final results in Vanuatu’s snap general election has been announced.

It’s taken nine days to count and check all the ballots, and the country still doesn’t know what the new government will look like.

There’s been a big turnover of MPs, with 25 of those elected to the 52-seat parliament being new faces. Turnout was mixed, with the Paama constituency reporting 90 percent of registered voters casting their vote, but only 41 percent did so on Pentecost.

No single party commands an obvious lead, with the previous coalition of the largely English speaking Vanua’aku and National United Parties, plus the Greens, with 21 seats, and the Francophone Union of Moderate Parties with 8. But all the major parties are fractionalized, and both VP/NUP and the UMP are reportedly claiming they have enough support to form a government.

Business

LABOR

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Opinion

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EDITORIAL

Retro pay funds for Tinian govt workers reprogrammed

All Tinian government employees entitled to retroactive salary increases will have to wait longer for payment, following the passage of a local law that reprograms previously earmarked funds for public programs.

Gov. Juan N. Babauta yesterday approved Tinian Local Bill 14-1, which sought to reprogram lapsed funds totaling some \$459,384.18 from fiscal years 2002 and 2003.

With the bill becoming Tinian Local

Ordinance 10-1, Senate President Joaquin Adriano said the reprogrammed funds would be used for scholarship and medical referral programs.

Babauta said the ordinance repeals a provision of Tinian Local Ordinance 9-2 relating to lapsed funds earmarked for the employees' retroactive pay, pursuant to Public Law 7-31.

The governor urged the Tinian legislative delegation to source out

funds for the payment of the retroactive salary adjustments for the island's government employees.

"When I approved the local FY2004 budget for Tinian, I commended the Tinian legislative delegation for allocating lapsed funds...to pay for the retroactive salary adjustment," Babauta said. "I propose to the members of the Tinian legislative delegation to find ways to pay this particular obligation." *(John Ravelo)*

Sessions educate law enforcers and judicial branch on disability issues

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER

Several sessions of the American with Disability Act Symposium brought members of the judicial branch and law enforcement agencies up to speed on ways to identify people with disabilities who find themselves within the system after committing criminal acts, and ways to assist these people.

Developmental Council executive director Thomas J. Camacho said yesterday that the sessions, held from July 12 to 15, "opened eyes" and brought awareness to the various instances of persons with disabilities running afoul with the law and how to handle these situations.

"We have people with disability who commit criminal acts, not knowing that what they are doing is a crime," he said.

Camacho said several presentations during the sessions showed various plans and models being used to deal and assist a person with disability, with the intention to limit repeated offenses and bring understanding to both branches as to the various ways of recognizing solutions.

Camacho said a coalition strictly devoted toward assisting and guiding people with disabilities who are going through the legal system is needed in the Commonwealth.

"We need a coalition...between the DDC, the law enforcement, the Northern Marianas Protection Advocacy System Inc., and ARC [Association for Retarded Citizens] in guiding and proving assistance for these people," he said.

Camacho added that future assistance from ARC, which is based in Colorado Springs, is necessary to assist with creating a model suitable for situations found in the Marianas.

He conceded, though, that funding necessary to accomplish this goal is needed. "We need additional funds, and we looking into that," he said.

The ADA Symposium is part of celebrating July as ADA Awareness Month. It began on July 12 and was originally scheduled to conclude on July 28; however, Camacho said another session has been added.

"On July 30, we will have a two-to three-hour presentation for small

businesses dealing with accessibility requirements, accommodation of employees with disabilities, [and] rights of the employees. It is intended for employers with 100 or less employees," he said.

Further, Camacho said that due to the low number of registrants, sessions originally scheduled for this week have been rescheduled.

Sessions dealing with ADA Title I: Employment and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, Accessible Information Technology, and ADA Titles II-V have been rescheduled for Sept. 27-29. One of the sessions may take place sometime in August, depending on the schedule of a representative of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Sessions resume next week, dealing with ADA Accessibility Guidelines, Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards, and the local Parking Access Act for Individuals with Disabilities. Session dates are from July 26 to 28 and are being held at the Saipan World Resort.

To register, call 664-7000, fax to 664-7030, or email ada@cnmidccouncil.org.

innards give the sensation of cutting flesh or pushing through body parts such as the throat or colon. A video screen shows what a doctor would watch during the procedure, such as ultrasound images.

"Do I think this is a wave of the future? No question," said Dr. Stephen Miller of the American Board of Medical Specialties, which oversees certification for medical specialists. "This is a major goal of the medical education and evaluation system."

The top systems are pricey but so realistic that experts predict they'll become standard for training new doctors and for testing experienced ones who soon will face tougher recertification.

The technology is barely 10 years old, and already simulators are widely used for training U.S. military medics and nurses and medical technicians at many community colleges. At least half of the nation's 120 medical schools already use simulators such as Medical Education Technologies Inc.'s Human Patient Simulator mannequin and Laerdal Medical's SimMan to teach students and residents, or graduates completing training at hospitals.

"The mannequin is excellent," said Dr. Eric Chang, a second-year surgical resident who has trained in the simulation center at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in New Brunswick.

UNSAFE

From Page 1

law enforcement type of attitude," Deleon Guerrero said. "Unlike the Labor Health and Safety Division [under the CNMI Department of Labor], which inspects only companies employing nonresident workers, we provide consultation to any employer regardless of ethnicity," he added.

He noted that the program particularly benefits small companies that cannot afford expensive consultation services with private firms.

At present, the consultation office focuses on reducing or eliminating injury rates in construction companies, which post the highest number of accidents, Deleon Guerrero said. The accidents most commonly result from lack of awareness and training, and mere disregard of proper safety measures.

"Some workers don't wear hard hats because it's too hot. Others use homemade ladders often made out of wood

that is not of proper grade, and which breaks easily," he related.

He said this attitude usually changes when an employer voluntarily invites OSHA to visit the jobsite. "When we come, we tell workers that we are there because their employer cares for them, and that usually improves their whole attitude about workplace safety," Deleon Guerrero said.

OSHA is also giving free seminars and translating relevant publications into various languages such as Chinese, Korean and Filipino, in order to reach out to more workers.

The 2nd Annual Governor's Conference on Safety and Health, sponsored by the Northern Marianas Alliance for Safety and Health, will be held from Aug. 17 to 20 at the Dai-ichi Hotel in Garapan.

Deleon Guerrero said instructors from OSHA's main training institution in Chicago will be coming to give lectures on various topics.

11 LOCALS

From Page 1

monwealth Ports Authority and Robert Repeki, John Camacho, Norman Skilling, Joseph Muna, and Paul Lisua, all currently employed in the private sector.

Babauta said a crew from Guam, consisting of about 10 members, would be deployed as well.

He said the U.S. Forestry Service conducts federally funded training sessions on island every January, in hopes of attracting residents for possible deployment to fight wildfires during summer. The crew enlisted during the training, becoming "Hot Shots," a name that Babauta says classifies all who are certified to fight forest fires.

"This is the third time that we have people from here go to assist with fighting fire," he said.

Department of Public Safety commissioner Edward Camacho said

yesterday he is currently pushing for the two local fire fighters to remain on island amid the shortage of personnel.

Some 30 DPS personnel from Saipan are currently in Hawaii for the annual three-week training of Army reservists, but the administration is anticipating the reservists' prolonged deployment and possible assignment to the Middle East and Afghanistan. Twenty of them come from the police divisions, while 10 others are employed with the Division of Fire.

The CNMI recently received notification to deploy the reservists, totaling some 83, including the DPS personnel. Reservists from Saipan, Guam and American Samoa form part of the Army Reserve's 500-strong 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry.

The deployment leaves the department with 71 firefighters on Saipan. The number will be reduced to 69 once Pangelinan and Sasamoto are deployed.

BABAUTA

From Page 1

China] issue is bigger than ours because it concerns a broader diplomatic policy. Unfortunately, we fell victim to it," Babauta said.

On June 30, People's Republic of China Premier Wen Jiabao assured Fiji Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase of his commitment to grant Fiji approved destination status.

Press secretary Peter Callaghan said the Commonwealth would get China's approval "once the superpowers take a deep breath and calm down a little."

Callaghan noted that the United States and China are currently involved in a "diplomatic tit for tat," as evident in China's decision to cut the office hours of Chinese embassies issuing visas to U.S. citizens. The shortened office hours, he added, apply only to tourists who are U.S. citizens.

"And we're caught in the middle of that," Callaghan said.

But the press secretary maintained that the CNMI has a good chance of getting the approved destination status, given the islands' appeal to Chinese tourists and proximity to China.

Currently, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, are among the 34 countries awarded approved destination status for the Chinese market.

The ADS is a major incentive that guides Chinese tourists when making travel choices. Chinese tourists are able to travel to ADS countries more easily as part of pre-organized tour groups.

According to the World Tourism Organization, 12 million Chinese people traveled overseas in 2001. If the current trend continues, China will become the fourth largest source for outbound travelers with 100 million tourists.

NEW

From Page 1

Some are almost lifelike mannequins with plastic ears and hair, veins that can be injected, eyes that can move and interchangeable genitals. They can't be hurt or killed, even though they have a pulse, a beating heart and lungs that breathe. The most sophisticated can be programmed to simulate every imaginable medical crisis and then respond as a doctor works on the "patient."

Other, virtual reality-type simulators combine video or computer images with tactile feedback. Trainees insert needles or surgical tools into a plastic box whose

Business

Asia

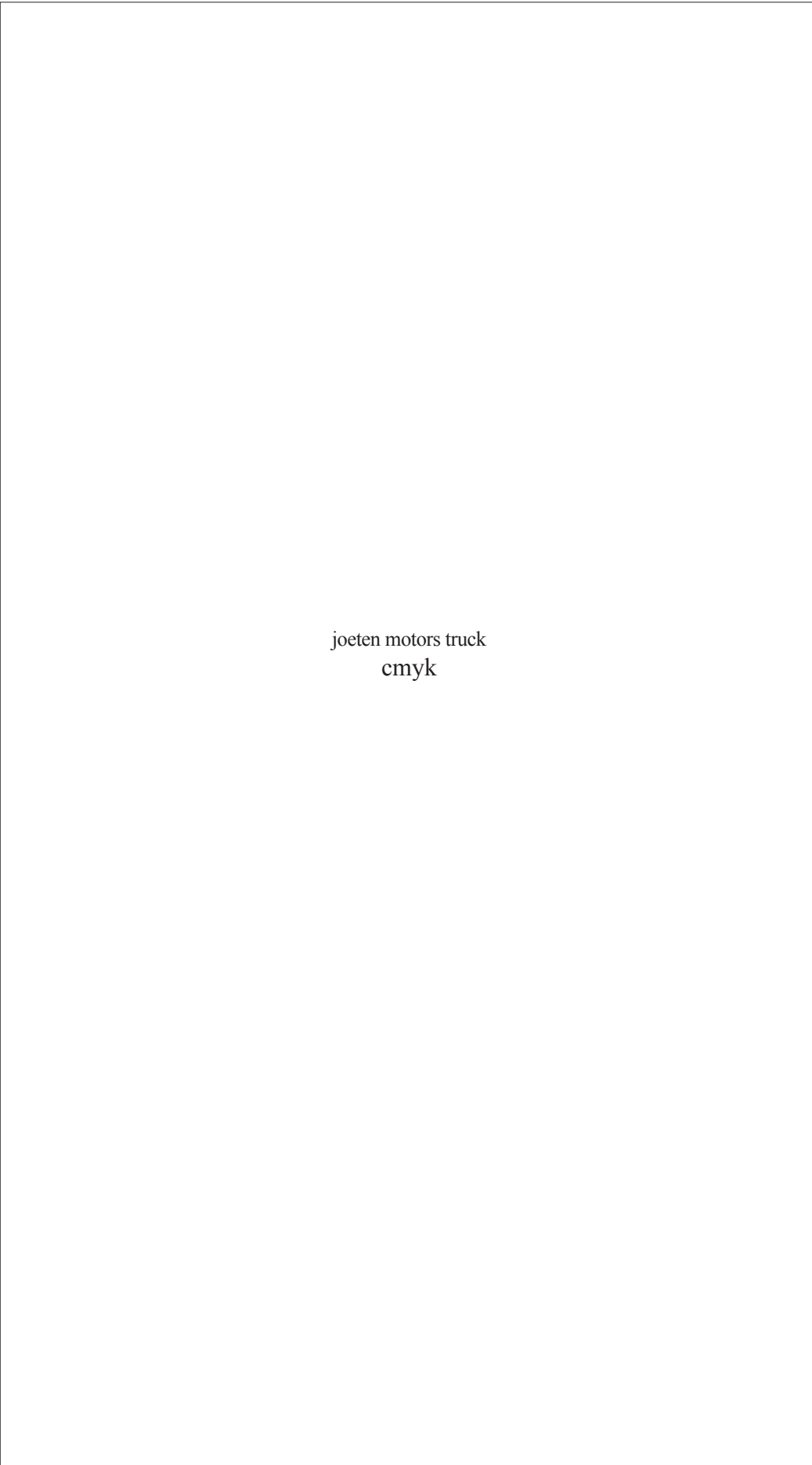


World

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Life & Style

Sunday melts into just part of the week

By TED ANTHONY
AP NATIONAL WRITER

Once, within living memory, it was a day apart in many places: a 24-hour stretch of family time when liquor was unavailable, church was the rule, shopping was impossible and—in some towns—weekend staples like tending the lawn and playing in the park met with hearty disapproval. But America changed, and it dragged Sunday along with it.

Though Sunday still means worship and family time for millions of Americans, today it also means things it once didn't—12-packs of Bud, the NFL on TV, catching up with the week's accumulated errands, picking up some CDs at Best Buy, moving through a 24/7 culture.

"Today, for a lot of Americans, Sunday's just another day you have to go to work at Wal-Mart," says John Hinshaw, a labor historian at Lebanon Valley College in Annville, Pa.

Last week, the Virginia legislature fixed a loophole it accidentally created when, attempting to abolish old "blue laws," it gave workers the right to take Sundays off as a day of rest. In the few days that the loophole was on the books, employees around Virginia started telling their supervisors

that they wouldn't be coming to work on Sundays.

The legislative mistake was a quirk, nothing more. But its quick and definitive correction by Virginia lawmakers summoned back in special session illustrated how markedly Sunday's place in American culture has evolved.

In a land where the pursuit of happiness is part of the national charter, Sunday's evolution attests to both Americans' harried lives and their determination to wring every drop of fun out of every day of the week.

The Protestant notion of Sunday began to change in the 1800s with immigrant laborers, many Roman Catholic, who saw things differently. Many were devoted to "a Sunday that took a very different shape—church in the morning and leisure in the afternoon," says Alexis McCrossen, author of "Holy Day, Holiday: The American Sunday."

The 20th century brought pushes toward a shorter working week, and a major work-reform law passed in the 1930s created more down time and made Sunday less pivotal—at the same time commercial culture really took hold.

"You have a commodification of everything in American life—our time, our space, our experiences," McCrossen says. "And that puts a lot of

pressure ... to open up Sunday because there's so much profit to be made on this day that most people don't work."

Across the nation, laws governing Sunday conduct—some dating to the 17th century—have fallen. In some places, like South Carolina, the changes created a crazy-quilt patchwork that allows some stores to open at some hours while others can't.

In Maine, it wasn't until 1990 that voters repealed a law barring Sunday shopping at supermarkets and department stores. In Texas, as late as 1985, everything from kitchenware to air conditioners to curtains couldn't be sold on two consecutive weekend days—a move designed to outlaw them on Sunday.

These days, it's unimaginable to many Americans, particularly younger ones: A mall closed on Sunday? The supermarket unavailable? Even laws governing Sunday alcohol, though they remain on some states' books, are falling away.

Today, 31 states permit Sunday sales of liquor, according to the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States. In the past two years, nine states initiated Sunday sales—including Massachusetts, where some of the earliest moral-conduct laws were passed. New

Jersey-based Commerce Bank—a bank!—has focused an entire promotional campaign around doing business on Sundays.

One of the most ubiquitous characters in America's weekend landscape—the Sunday paper, with its color-splashed comics, coupon pullouts and paper-weight girth—is changing, too. Sunday circulation dropped by nearly 596,000 in the past two years, according to Editor & Publisher magazine. People say that even on Sunday, they lack the time for such languor.

"We've erased a lot of the distinctions between night and day, between weekday and weekend," says Susan Orlean, author of "Saturday Night in America," a 1990 book. "Our notions of time and space are collapsing."

It's hard to imagine a place that knows more about Sundays than Parade, the magazine that since 1941 has been inserted into Sunday newspapers—more than 340 at last count, for nearly 36 million readers. Editor-in-chief Lee Kravitz believes the American Sunday remains intact—even if the activities have changed.

"As our lives became busier, that's sort of taken over Saturday," he says. "So we do those chores—all those things we have to do, banking, laundry,

housekeeping, shopping. Some of it has spilled onto Sunday. But for the most part, I think Americans still protect the specialness of Sunday."

In 2000, a Parade-commissioned study found 70 percent of Americans say they do what they want on Sundays. An overwhelming 90 percent like Sunday more than or as much as any other day of the week, and 92 percent said they spent time with family. The margin of error was 2 percent.

It seems, then, that what's changed about Sunday is not the idea—rest, relax, recharge the batteries—but the content. While traditional activities remain, the do-it-now culture of commerce and communication means that downtime has been redefined upward.

Sunday is no longer, as the writer H.L. Mencken put it, merely "a day given over by Americans to wishing that they themselves were dead and in Heaven, and that their neighbors were dead and in Hell."

"Maybe maintaining the idea of time having some relevance may actually become more meaningful," Orlean says. "I'm not sure that people really want to live in a universe in which there's no day and night, no week and weekend. I don't know that that gives us anything."

Being untrendy is getting to be the latest trend

By GREG MORAGO
THE HARTFORD COURANT

Let's all play follow the leader. It's really quite simple—just do whatever everyone else is doing.

"Fahrenheit 9/11" is the movie of the moment. Let's all buy a ticket!

"Nip/Tuck" is the hot TV show. Sign us all up for cable!

Fantasia Barrino is on the top of the charts. Quick, get us to the record store!

Bill Clinton's "My Life" is the book du jour. We don't care how much it weighs; give us a couple more copies!

See? You do know how to play. Americans, obsessed with being on the pulse of trends, are more than adept at the game that results in immediate mass consumption of whatever new whim courses through society. Somewhere in the back of every closet in this country is the Pet Rock we all had to have in 1975.

But what of those unfortunates who always seem to resist the trends, who are a few steps (OK, miles) behind the curve, who are either blissfully unaware of the hot new gizmo or defiantly breaking from the pack? Just who are these subversives?

They might, in fact, be the hottest new trend: the untrendy.

They are the people who have only just begun the Atkins Diet or the South Beach Diet. They are the ones who only recently picked up a Norah Jones album (the first one). They are the folks who didn't mind waiting until "The Sopranos" came out on DVD.

They are people like Rich Meyers, who only recently met "The DaVinci Code." Meyers, a wedding photographer from southern New Jersey, said he's behind on "literally everything" that causes a stir in pop culture. And he said he could not care less.

"I'll watch it on reruns," he said of

popular TV shows. "Hot movies, I'm like five months later. It doesn't bother me. I'm probably not even aware of it half the time. A lot of times I find that if everyone is doing it, I probably wouldn't want to. Maybe it's a little rebellious streak."

That rebel attitude, that feisty unconcern where trends are concerned, might just be the next new thing, said pop culture expert Bob Thompson.

"Not only is it OK to be behind, there's a sense that someone just now reading 'The DaVinci Code' is just so cool. You no longer have to be ashamed to be three months behind," said Thompson, professor of media and popular culture at Syracuse University. "The whole definition of cool is that you were away from what everyone else was doing, a little oblivious, that you could care less."

If Thompson is correct that untrendy is the new trend, imagine the cultural shift. Suddenly there will be no shame in mullets and Birkenstocks. Your "out" pashminas will be "in." No apologies necessary for just now reading a Harry Potter book or getting hooked on the so-over "Real World." Frye boot wearers of the world unite! Napoleon Dynamite for president!

"There are some people who will always be there the first day when things come out. Those people will always be important," Thompson said. "On the other hand, you have a lot of people who are consuming mass culture on their own terms. They're deciding how they'll do it."

And when they'll do it.

"When a new restaurant opens, unless I'm invited to the opening, I wait until it settles down," said marketing consultant Tim Gaillard, who teaches marketing on the adjunct faculty of Hartford (Conn.) College for Women. "I have to be up on everything in pop culture, but it doesn't mean that I prac-

tice what I preach. I won't stand in line for anything. I don't care if it's 'Spider-Man 2'; I won't stand in line."

How did we get to the point where bucking the trend is trendy? Our very obsession with knowing the trends and following the fads made us hypersensitive to being left out of the loop, Thompson suggests.

"In many ways, the identification of trends is the biggest trend out there," he said. "Twenty years ago there were maybe zero people on the pop-culture beat. Nobody was doing anniversary stories on the invention of lawn chairs or Spam. But now there's an enormous industry of pop culture. Magazines are devoted to it; entire cable channels are devoted to it."

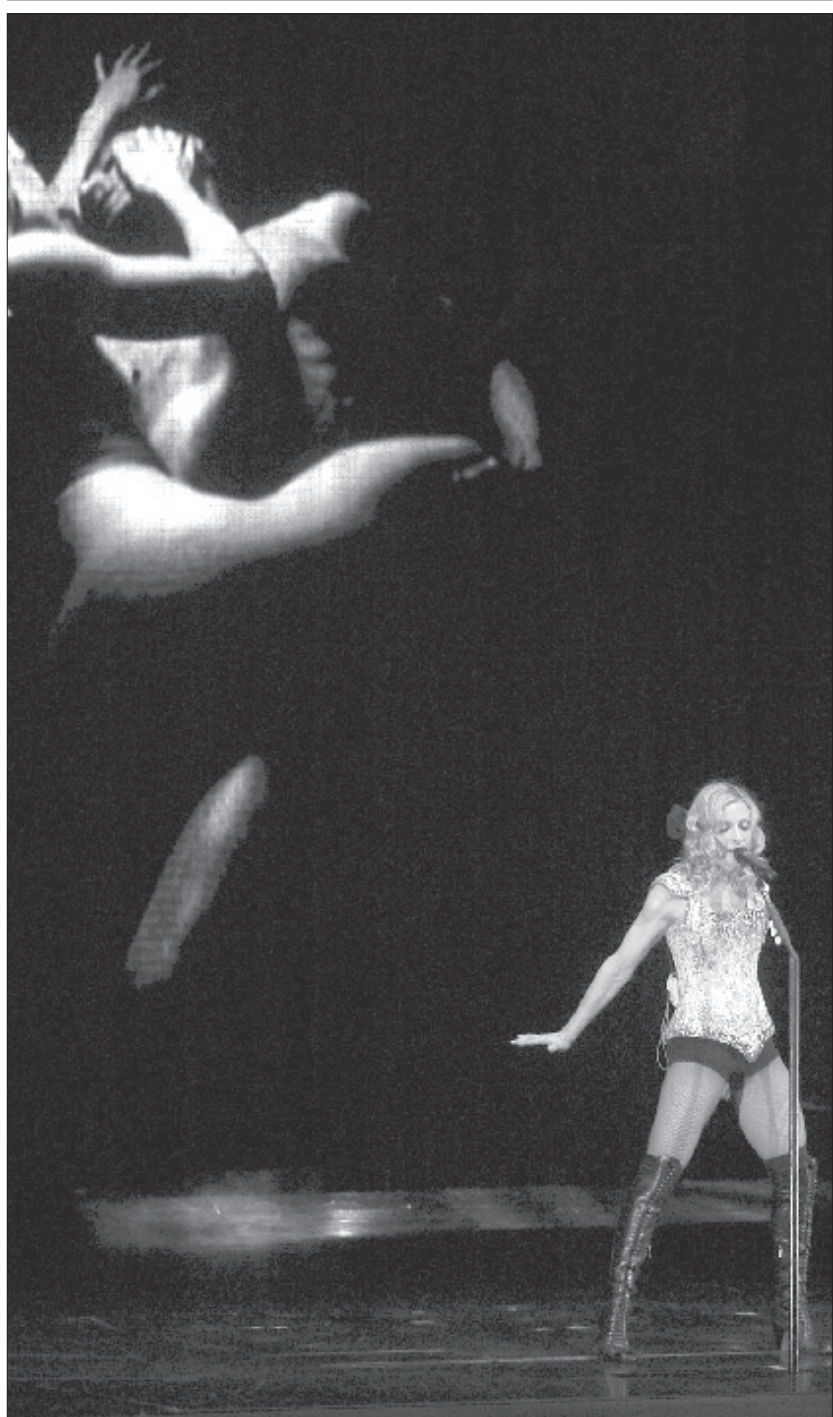
The reporting of trends before they even have the chance to blossom or ripen into full-fledged cultural phenomena also muddies the true trend experience.

"With media becoming so prevalent in the last 10 years, everyone is so much better informed and more sophisticated about what's going on in the world," said Gaillard. "In the old days, fads weren't talked about; they just happened. It took a long time for fads and trends to happen."

That speed in reporting trends actually can work against the trend. "In some ways, the identification of a trend can be the kiss of death of a trend," Thompson said.

So the next time you see someone reading "The Lovely Bones," extolling the virtues of Kelly Clarkson or enjoying a naughty "Sex and the City" giggle, think of them in admiring terms. They might be hipper than you think.

"But there are limits," Thompson added. "If your response to someone is 'Is that your final answer?' that's going too far. There are limits. The same is true for being 'voted off the island.' Don't even go there."



QUEEN OF REINVENTION

Madonna performs during a concert in Toronto Sunday July 18, 2004.

AP

Will Smith's 'I, Robot' debuts at No. 1

By **DAVID GERMAIN**
AP MOVIE WRITER

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Will Smith has the summer crowd well programmed. Smith's sci-fi thriller "I, Robot" was his latest No. 1 July debut, opening with \$52.25 million and bumping "Spider-Man 2" from the top spot at the weekend box office, according to studio estimates Sunday.

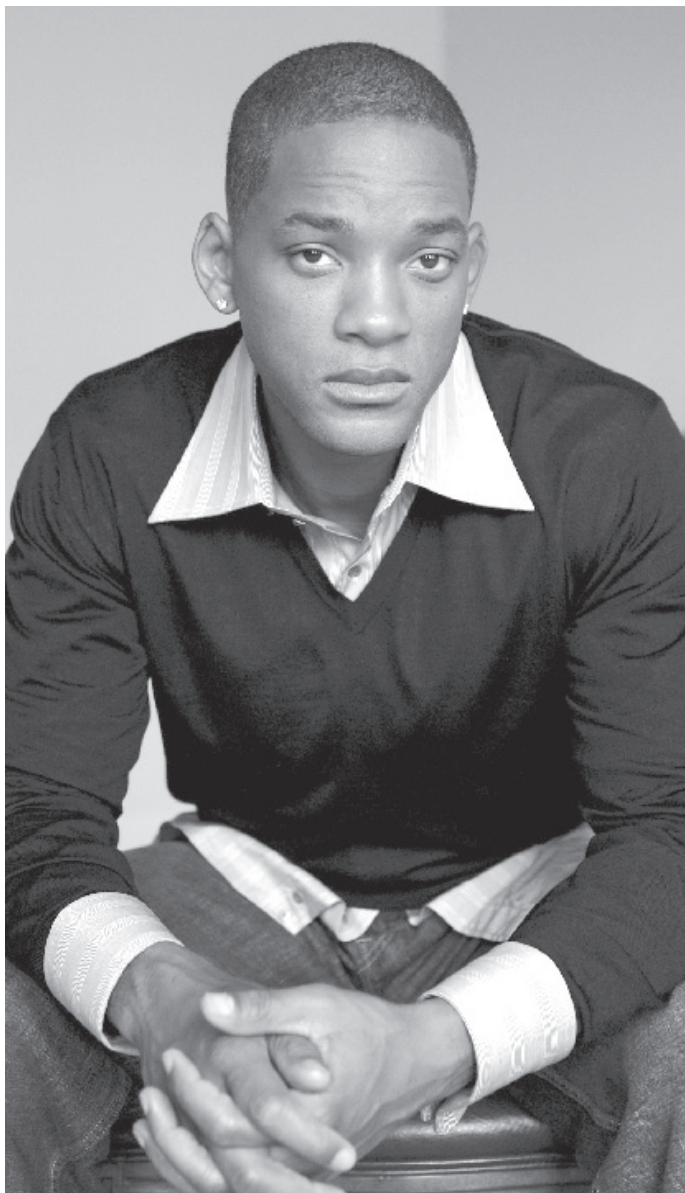
If the numbers hold when final figures are released Monday, "I, Robot" would be Smith's best debut ever, coming in just ahead of "Independence Day," "Men in Black" and "Men in Black II," all July premieres that opened in the \$50 million to \$52 million range.

"My God, this guy opens movies," said Bruce Snyder, head of distribution at 20th Century Fox, which released "I, Robot." "He's just so likable, he takes something like science fiction, which can be a little cold, and he makes it warm and entertaining."

After two weekends in first place, "Spider-Man 2" slipped to No. 2 with \$24.2 million, lifting its total domestic haul to \$301.7 million after just 19 days. The movie crossed the \$300 million mark three days faster than the original "Spider-Man," according to distributor Sony.

The weekend's other new wide release, Hilary Duff's romance "A Cinderella Story," premiered in third place with \$13.8 million.

Michael Moore's "Fahrenheit 9/11" held on at No. 5 with \$7



Will Smith, star of the sci-fi thriller "I, Robot," poses for a photo in Beverly Hills, Calif., July 8, 2004. AP

million, raising its domestic total to \$93.8 million. Moore's assault on President Bush over the Sept. 11 attacks has become the undisputed box-office champ

among documentaries, passing the \$84.4 million domestic haul of the IMAX film "Everest."

"I, Robot," inspired by the short-story collection of Isaac

Asimov, stars Smith as a police detective in 2035 who suspects a robot has committed a murder.

Along with the "Men in Black" movies and "Independence Day," "I, Robot" joins "Wild Wild West" and last year's "Bad Boys II" in Smith's string of summer smashes.

"He's Mr. July," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office tracker Exhibitor Relations. "He's the perfect summer action star. He's a guy who seems like somebody fun to hang out with, but you know the guy can kick some butt when he has to."

"A Cinderella Story" stars Duff as a saintly California teen slaving away for her odious stepmother and stepsisters in a modern update of the fairy tale.

The movie drew mainly from Duff's teen and preteen fan base, with young girls and mothers making up most of the audience, said Dan Fellman, head of distribution at Warner Bros., which released "A Cinderella Story."

In narrow release, Jeff Bridges and Kim Basinger's "The Door in the Floor" had a healthy debut, taking in \$444,983 in 47 theaters. The family drama was adapted from John Irving's novel "A Widow for One Year."

"Maria Full of Grace," which won the award as audience favorite at last January's Sundance Film Festival, also opened strongly in limited release, taking in \$124,000 at seven theaters. The drama centers on a young Colombian woman who signs on as a "mule" carrying heroin to the United States.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at North American theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc. Final figures will be released Monday.

1. **"I, Robot,"** \$52.25 million.
2. **"Spider-Man 2,"** \$24.2 million.
3. **"A Cinderella Story,"** \$13.8 million
4. **"Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy,"** \$13.4 million.
5. **"Fahrenheit 9/11,"** \$7 million.
6. **"King Arthur,"** \$6.9 million.
7. **"The Notebook,"** \$5.45 million.
8. **"White Chicks,"** \$3.4 million.
9. **"Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story,"** \$3.2 million.
10. **"The Terminal,"** \$3.1 million.

CBS exec defends firing of 'CSI' stars

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The firing of two "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation" stars in a salary dispute was fair and intended to help the TV industry draw the fiscal line, CBS chief Leslie Moonves said Sunday.

Actors Jorja Fox and George Eads, who play investigators Sara Sidle and Nick Stokes on the hit CBS crime drama, were dumped last week when they failed to report for work on the upcoming season, he said.

"There comes a point where we feel a contract is a contract. ... We all have to look out for the future of the network television business," said Moonves, co-president and co-chief operating officer of CBS parent company Viacom.

Among the major broadcast networks only CBS and NBC avoided losses last year, he told the Television Critics Association.

Deals with Fox and Eads were renegotiated after two years and a raise was offered for this fifth season although there was no contractual obligation to do so, he said. The actors reportedly wanted a raise in their \$100,000-per-episode pay.

Network admits lying about filmmaker bio

NEW YORK (AP)—The Sci Fi Channel admitted Friday that it lied last month in claiming it was at odds with filmmaker M. Night Shyamalan and was making an unauthorized biography about his "buried secret."

The hoax was part of a "guerilla marketing campaign" that went too far, network president Bonnie Hammer said.

The network announced in December that the reclusive Shyamalan, maker of "The Sixth Sense" and "Signs," had agreed to participate in a documentary about his life to run in connection with this summer's release of his new movie, "The Village."

Sci Fi said last month, however, that Shyamalan had soured on the documentary when the questions got too personal. Documentarians Nathaniel Kahn and Callum Greene pressed on and made a three-hour film, "The Buried Secret of M. Night Shyamalan," without his cooperation, the network said.

The Associated Press wrote about the documentary last month, and other media also ran accounts. In an interview, Greene described how Shya-

malan's "cooperation dried up." A network spokesman told the AP that Sci Fi was confident it had legal grounds to air the film and would probably never work with Shyamalan again.

In a news release, Sci Fi said Shyamalan had attempted to shut down production of the "disturbing expose."

It was all a lie, and there is no buried secret, Hammer said Friday.

The documentary, scheduled to air Sunday, says a mysterious drowning of a child in a lake near Shyamalan's boyhood home in the Philadelphia area had profoundly affected his life and fueled his interest in the supernatural. That's not true either, Hammer said.

"We created a fictional special that was part-fact and part-fiction, and Night was part of the creation from the beginning," the network chief said.

Moviegoers walk away from Shyamalan's films not knowing what was real or not, and "we wanted to do the same thing in a special about his life," she said.

Sci Fi did not send a complete copy of the film to television critics, but sent a half-hour tape

of highlights this week that, in some spots, hinted it might be a mockumentary.

Actor Adrien Brody, a star of "The Village," is interviewed in the documentary saying that he was sworn to secrecy about everything in the movie. Asked if he had short or long hair in the film, he refused to answer.

"Perhaps we might have taken the guerilla campaign one step too far," Hammer said. "We thought it would create controversy and it probably went one step too far."

Hammer said she had been in on the hoax from the beginning and took responsibility for duping the public. Sci Fi, which is available in some 83 million homes, has recently been taken over by corporate parent NBC Universal.

"This marketing strategy is not consistent with our policy at NBC," said Rebecca Marks, NBC entertainment spokeswoman. "We would never intend to offend the public or the press and value our relationship with both."

Greene, a producer of "Lost in Translation," shares an agent with Shyamalan.

Persistent high school stalker won't take no for an answer

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: My family is dealing with a concern similar to "Trapped in Louisville." My teenage son is dating a lovely girl who attends a neighboring high school. She is being harassed by a boy who attends her school, rides her bus and lives in her neighborhood. I'll call him "Willy."

Willy has refused to honor repeated requests by the young lady to leave her alone. He makes unwanted advances toward her at school, follows her home and trespasses on her property.

The young lady's mother is not around during the daytime, due to her career. Her father is away defending our country. If my son becomes involved, I'm afraid there could be violence. I don't know what to do.

There are no witnesses willing to get involved. How do we get solid proof so Willy will not cause her harm? Who can we tell so that this will stop? We don't want to make this problem worse than it already is. Willy has threatened retribution if he gets into trouble over this.

DEEPLY CONCERNED
IN LAWRENCEVILLE, GA.

DEAR CONCERNED: It is time for the young lady's mother to pick up the phone and inform the police that her daughter is being stalked and threatened. Read on:

□ □ □ □

DEAR ABBY: I read the letter from "Trapped in Louisville" with mounting alarm and a horrible sense of déjà vu. She's the high school girl being stalked by a classmate who calls her once or twice every hour. When her family got call blocking, he bought a cell phone and continued to call. Now he does it from the homes of his friends.

Abby, I am a university professor in a small coastal town. Our university is still in shock from the kidnapping, beating, rape and murder of a sophomore student in her dormitory. The student who admitted the crime had been pestering the girl for dates, despite repeated rebuffs. After he killed her, he called her parents and said, "I've murdered your daughter."

During the police investigation, the girl's father said, "There was a boy who was stalking her, but we thought that had gone by the wayside."

I disagree with your advice that "Trapped" should speak up to her stalker or have her parents call his. They should go straight to law enforcement NOW.

Although the girl fears her stalker will call her a racist, this has nothing to do with race. Her family should not try to handle the situation on their own.

CONCERNED EDUCATOR,
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEAR CONCERNED: I stand corrected. My deepest sympathy goes to the family of that unfortunate woman.

Readers, there are laws against stalking in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. There are also laws against stalking at the federal level. Stalking is abusive, anti-social, sick behavior. It is not a compliment to the victim, and it is not benign. Stalkers are addicts, and the substance to which they are addicted is their prey. That is why stalkers should be considered dangerous and the police should be notified when stalking occurs.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Good advice for everyone—teens to seniors—is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$5 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)



Dear Abby

Flynt to open upscale sex shop in Fla.

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP)—Hustler Magazine publisher Larry Flynt is expanding his pornography empire to South Florida, opening an upscale sex shop despite opposition from this city's mayor and others.

Hustler Hollywood is supposed to open Friday, and Flynt is scheduled to visit on Aug. 3.

"In every city we open a store there is always some politician who needs to showboat before his religious or conservative constituents about keeping us out," said Flynt, 61, who's currently on a national 19-city book tour.

Mayor Jim Naugle and city Commissioner Dean Trantalis had spearheaded an attempt to

block Flynt by changing a city zoning law.

Currently "less than half" of a store's inventory can be sexually oriented if it's within 500 feet of a residential area. Otherwise, the city can shut it down.

Naugle and Trantalis wanted the ordinance changed so a store could be closed if a "substantial" amount of its inventory was of a sexual nature. But, after Flynt threatened to sue, the Fort Lauderdale City Commission voted against the notion.

Naugle says he won't be rolling out the red carpet for Flynt.

"I am not happy about Flynt coming into town and opening his store," Naugle said. "If he



sends me an invitation where I have to call and RSVP, his phone is not going to ring."

Trantalis declined to comment.

Flynt insists that politicians know his Hustler Hollywood stores are not sex stores in the traditional sense.

"These are upscale shops where sexuality is presented in a clean, healthy, natural way, which is why 50 percent of our customer base are women," Flynt said.

Hustler magazine publisher Larry Flynt speaks at a news conference in the Beverly Hills section of Los Angeles, in this Aug. 4, 2003, file photo.

AP

Hundreds flock to see Damon at screening

BOISE, Idaho (AP)—Hundreds of fans gathered in front of the historic Egyptian Theater to catch a glimpse of Matt Damon and producer Frank Marshall at a benefit screening of "The Bourne Supremacy."

The sequel to the 2002 film "The Bourne Identity" opens nationally July 23.

Proceeds from Saturday's ben-

efit went to the Boise Contemporary Theater, now in its fifth season.

Marshall said he began visiting Boise in the early 1970s and bought property here soon after. He started bringing his movies to Boise nearly a decade later, including "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom."

"It's my favorite stop on the

press tour," Damon told The Associated Press.

Contemporary Theater artistic director Matthew Clark said about half of the theater's \$500,000 yearly operating fund comes from ticket sales, so the theater depends on donor contribution, federal grants and benefit screenings.

Damon, 33, is currently filming "Ocean's Twelve"—the sequel to the 2001 hit "Ocean's Eleven."



Damon

Cosby sticks to humor at Miami event

MIAMI (AP)—Bill Cosby avoided his recent criticism of some segments of the black community, instead sticking to humor and praise for parents during a charity event for at-risk children.

Many in Saturday night's crowd had expected Cosby to continue his series of remarks urging blacks to stop blaming others for social problems such as teen pregnancy, poverty and academic underachievement.

Cosby appeared before a packed crowd at Zo's Summer Groove, which is organized by former Miami Heat center Alonzo Mourning.

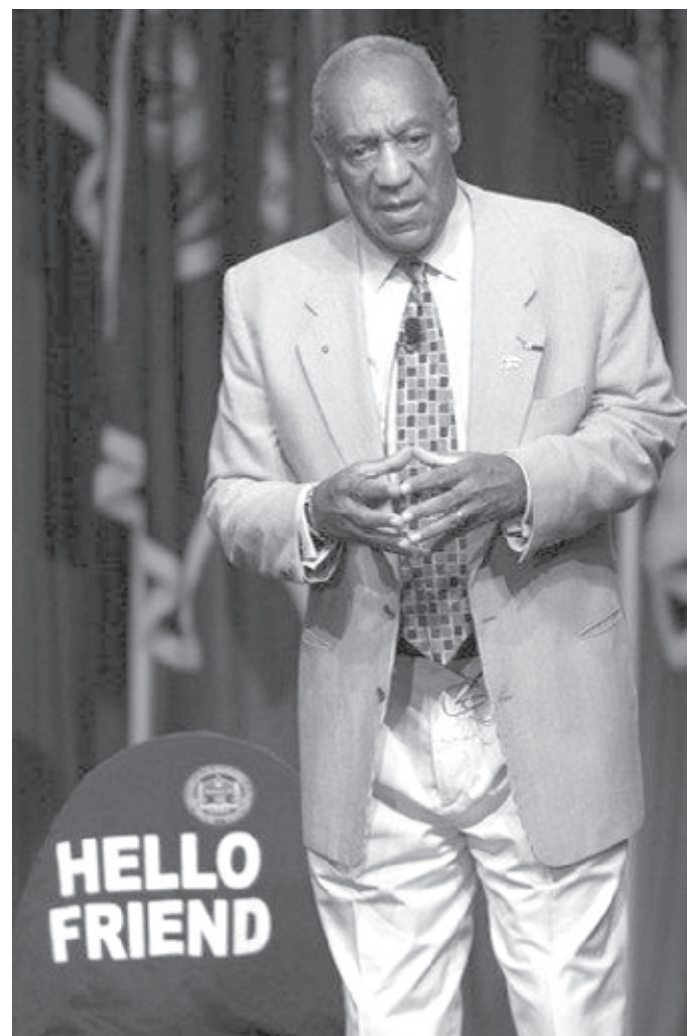
Cosby, wearing a sweat shirt reading "Parent Power," joked that his parents and grandparents always knew exactly what he was up to.

"All day long, you were watched," he told the audience. "Even if there was a drawn shade, there was at least one eye peeking out of it. My mother knew everything I did."

In May, Cosby stunned an audience commemorating the landmark civil rights ruling Brown vs. Board of Education by citing elevated school drop-out rates for inner-city black students and criticizing low-income blacks for not using the opportunities the civil rights movement won for them.

Cosby made similar comments this month at a gathering of black community activists in Chicago, when he said many young blacks are illiterate and "going nowhere."

On Saturday, he made an in-



Bill Cosby performs a comedy routine during the 95th annual NAACP convention, July 13, 2004, at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia.

direct allusion to those remarks, saying that television star Art Linkletter once told him, "'You know, Bill, as you get older, you're in sync with 5-year-old people and you don't really give a damn about what people think

about what you say.'"

Before Cosby's speech, Mourning said he did not hesitate to invite the entertainer.

"No, because it's the truth. The truth is confrontational," Mourning said.

Sandy Duncan is shown in New York in this Jan. 18, 2002, file photo.

AP

Sandy Duncan laments Broadway musicals

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP)—Perennially perky Sandy Duncan is slamming what she considers the sorry state of Broadway musicals.

Duncan stars in a two-week run of "The King and I" starting Tuesday.

The Rodgers and Hammerstein musical marked her professional debut as a 12-year-old in Dallas.

But now, at 58, she said an industry once run by producers with vision and heart has devolved into a business run by "money men who don't have an eye for the product."

"It used to be that producers would make a profit, with the idea that they would put that money into a new show," Duncan told the St. Paul Pioneer Press.

"Now, they want to make a killing, and so they're flogging these shows into 10-, 12-, 14-year runs. It hurts the whole creative community."

The result, she said, can be seen in the lack of new titles on Broadway and on the road. Her six-month tour as Anna in "The King and I," she said, just proves her point.

"Shows like this are being done to death because there's no new product," she said.

Pastimes

Shannon Essenpreis wins Jr. Miss crown

MOBILE, Ala. (AP)—Texan Shannon Essenpreis was crowned America's Junior Miss after belting out a Broadway showtune and soaring through interviews with her "bubbly" personality.

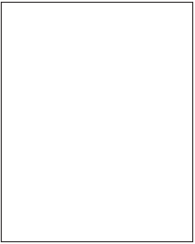
Though Essenpreis was crowned Saturday night, television viewers won't see it until July as producers switch to a "reality TV" format. PAX Network camera crews followed the 50 contestants for two weeks leading up to Saturday's contest.

Essenpreis was among five finalists who were given on-the-spot questions tailored to their individual interests. She was asked how she would use the enthusiasm she's displayed as her school's mascot into her planned career as a broadcast journalist.

"I was so nervous," she said after the show. "And the question was so long that by the end of it, I wasn't sure what they were asking me."

Her answer? She'll report on the positive aspects of life while maintaining her personal optimism.

After the contest, Heisman Trophy winner and Junior Miss judge Herschel Walker said he was particularly impressed with Essenpreis' charm and "bubbly" character in her interview last week. Essenpreis won a \$50,000 scholarship.

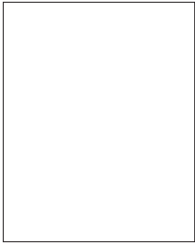


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SAIPAN TRIBUNE